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Whaihanga
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Media release

18 July 2024 – Under embargo until 5pm

New industry initiative to reduce carbon emissions of New Zealand buildings

A new industry-led initiative aims to reduce the environmental impact of Aotearoa New Zealand's buildings, which contribute up to 20% of the national carbon footprint.

Today, the Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) announced a partnership with Masterspec to develop a national online resource of carbon data for construction materials and products.

This free and authoritative database will empower the industry to make environmentally responsible decisions regarding their building designs and material selections. BRANZ has been collating and verifying the data underpinning this initiative since 2012.

In response to industry demand, and with endorsement from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment | Hikina Whakatutuki, this initiative will use BRANZ's underlying data to create a highly accessible and usable national data resource, covering a broader range of construction products and materials. As an independent and impartial research organisation, BRANZ will continue to ensure the carbon data feeding the online resource is reliable and accurate.

Minister for Building and Construction Hon Chris Penk says this initiative is an excellent example of how the construction sector can collaborate to achieve great results.

“In particular, providing high quality data will enable conscious consumers to make informed decisions. This in turn empowers builders to provide more sustainable solutions that the market is seeking,” says Penk.

BRANZ Chief Executive Claire Falck says that sharing the data is about the industry working together to provide essential tools to design more sustainable buildings.

“Today marks a significant step forward for sustainable building in New Zealand. To reach Aotearoa New Zealand's zero-carbon targets, we need collaboration across the building and construction industry.

“Our research shows that the best way to drive this change is to work together to equip the industry with the tools, knowledge and abilities to make effective zero-carbon decisions,” says Falck.

Masterspec Chief Executive Russell Turner says, “New Zealand's construction, architecture and design professionals need to establish the embodied carbon content of their projects and need to know the consequences of their product decisions.”



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“This partnership will provide a science-based repository, combined with a service to maintain and update the data regularly. The development of the national embodied carbon dataset for construction products will help the industry to reduce its carbon emissions,” he says.

Master Builders Chief Executive Ankit Sharma says the initiative exemplifies how collaboration and innovation can drive meaningful change.

“It highlights the industry's commitment to sustainability and innovation. It's important that we, as sector, play our part in reducing emissions. This initiative is a crucial step towards providing the industry with better tools and resources that support decarbonisation across the whole construction life cycle,” says Sharma.

Te Kāhui Whaihanga | New Zealand Institute of Architects Perehitini (President) Huia Reriti says that registered architects all over Aotearoa welcome the initiative.

“Our members are already focused on making environmentally responsible decisions. We've hired a sustainability advisor, and this national resource will be another very valuable addition to the tools available to members.”

“By providing impartial data and including a more comprehensive range of materials, the initiative will help architects to reduce embodied carbon in every project they embark on and to get closer to our zero carbon targets faster,” he says.

The platform will be developed and built over the coming months, with the first data estimated to be available next year.

[ENDS]

Notes for editors:

- This partnership will be launched at an event at Parliament on **Thursday 18 July 2024, 4pm**. The event will be attended by Minister Penk, with attendees representing the building and construction industry and government.
- Speakers include:
 - Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Building and Construction
 - Huia Reriti, Perehitini (President) Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects
 - Judith Taylor, CIL/Masterspec Board Chair
 - Russell Turner, CIL/Masterspec CEO
 - Claire Falck, BRANZ CEO
 - Ankit Sharma, Registered Master Builders Association (RMBA) CEO



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About the Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ):

The Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) is an independent and impartial building research and testing provider for Aotearoa New Zealand.

BRANZ is proudly independent. As a national research institution for building and construction, we use our systems knowledge, collaborative research, and broad networks to find practical solutions to improve Aotearoa New Zealand's buildings.

BRANZ is committed to a future where all New Zealanders can live in safe, healthy, sustainable and affordable homes. Find out more: branz.co.nz

About Masterspec:

Masterspec is an existing construction specification platform that is trusted by architects and product importers and manufacturers, and is independent of any manufacturer. It is owned by Construction Information Limited (CIL), which is jointly owned by Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects and Registered Master Builders Association.

CIL employs full-time architects and designers who assess and verify construction products for inclusion in the database for access by architects to create construction specifications for projects. Most commercial construction in New Zealand is specified using this platform. Find out more: masterspec.co.nz